

COLOMBIA

## Wanted, but Not Found

The leaders of the powerful Medellín cocaine cartel have become folk heroes for their ability to escape the relentless pursuit of government security forces. Last week Pablo Escobar Gaviria, 39, a leader of the drug ring that controls 80% of the cocaine entering the U.S., pulled off one of the most impressive get-aways. In an operation code named Against

**Escobar**

the Fortress, some 600 police and army troops raided a ranch 70 miles outside Medellín, but Escobar managed to elude them.

When the police fleet of ten helicopters suddenly appeared overhead at 6:30 a.m., one sentry ran to alert Escobar and others, while bodyguards opened fire with semiautomatic rifles. Escobar slipped away by running through a patch of wild cane, scuttling across a creek with planks laid over it and, finally, jumping into a speedboat and disappearing. A wide-scale ground and helicopter search failed to turn up Escobar, who is included on the U.S. Justice Department's list of the twelve most wanted Colombian drug traffickers. ■



8930

4 Dec 89  
Jumbo memo

61